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# JUSTICE

**Vol.40 ACTUALITÉS - REPORT No.1**

CANADIAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE ASSOCIATION - ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE JUSTICE PÉNALE

**CCJA SERIES 2025**  
**SÉRIE ACJP 2025**

**GENERAL TOPICS**  
**SUJETS GÉNÉRAUX**

**YOUNG RESEARCHERS**  
**JEUNES CHERCHEURS**



ONLINE - EN LIGNE : [CCJA-ACJP.CA](http://CCJA-ACJP.CA)

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The JUSTICE REPORT contains information of value to Association readers and the public interested in matters related to the administration of justice in Canada. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the Association's views, but are included to encourage reflection and action on the criminal justice system throughout Canada.

For more information on the activities of the CCJA, please contact:

L'ACTUALITÉS JUSTICE renferme des renseignements utiles aux lecteurs de l'Association et au public qui s'intéressent aux questions relatives à l'administration de la justice au Canada. Les opinions qui sont exprimées ne reflètent pas nécessairement les vues de l'Association, mais y figurent afin d'encourager à réfléchir et à agir sur la justice pénale dans tout le Canada.

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# JUSTICE

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# EDITORIAL

**NANCY WRIGHT**

Editor-in-Chief

*Justice Report*

Beginning this year, the *Justice Report* will move to a digital-only format—part of CCJA's commitment to sustainability and adapting to rising print and postage costs. We thank you for your support and encourage members and subscribers to update their email preferences to avoid service interruptions. As well, CCJA is in the process of transitioning the *Justice Report* website from **justicereport.ca** to **ccja-acjp.ca**, a change prompted by the passing of our longtime webmaster. We extend sincere condolences and thanks to Austin Taylor's family, who has generously kept the site active during this transition.

Each 2025 *Justice Report* will primarily feature articles by CCJA members, and put the spotlight on the CCJA and its affiliates. In this issue (40.1), we present CCJA's Board of Directors and Staff, two of CCJA's nine Position Papers—"Crime Prevention" and "Keeping Communities Safe"—highlighting Crime Prevention and Keeping Communities Safe from Crime, highlighting proactive strategies for reducing crime, along with an update on our Manitoba affiliate, including a report by President Mike Cook on MCJA's Crime Prevention Breakfast, where experts gather annually to discuss community-driven solutions; Dr. Robert (Bob) Christmas was the 2024 speaker. Finally, a student essay contest organized by the Ontario Criminal Justice Association (OCJA) reminds us how economic upheaval from a potential U.S. trade war could strain our justice system. Read more about this initiative and the OCJA in the next volume (41.2) of the *Justice Report*.

Also in this issue, longtime *Justice Report* contributor and former SIU Chair Howard Sapers returns with a critique of Structured Intervention Units, raising concerns about the overuse of segregation—particularly for Indigenous inmates—and the lack of oversight in ensuring humane treatment.

Our *Young Researcher Contributions* section presents five articles. Marcia Parker and co-author Anna Ahenakew, both Social Work students at First Nations University (FNU-SK), examine federal healing lodges versus penitentiaries through firsthand research and an interview with a provincial jail guard. Social Work student Devon Lucky Napope (FNU - SK.) shares his personal experience with intergenerational trauma through a powerful spoken-word poem. The CCJA extends heartfelt thanks to Professor Dr. Sharon Acoose (FNU - SK) for supporting these Indigenous contributions.

Carson Brody (B.A. Criminal Justice), 2024 MRU-CCJA Scholarship winner, analyzes a Canadian Reddit thread on body-worn cameras, finding strong support for their use but ongoing skepticism toward police accountability, demonstrating a need for more in-depth social media-based research. Finally, Canadian criminologist Dr. John Winterdyk, *Justice Report* Book Review Editor, presents reviews by Holly Wood (MA) and Catharine Pandila (MA) on *Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial* (Perron, 2024).

We hope this issue of the *Justice Report* informs and inspires!



# ÉDITORIAL

**NANCY WRIGHT**

Rédactrice en chef

*Actualités Justice*

À partir de cette année, l'*Actualités Justice Report* passera à un format exclusivement numérique — une décision qui s'inscrit dans l'engagement de l'ACJP envers la durabilité et son adaptation à l'augmentation des coûts d'impression et de poste. Nous vous remercions de votre soutien et encourageons les membres et abonnés à mettre à jour leurs préférences de courriel afin d'éviter toute interruption de service. De plus, l'ACJP est en train de transférer le site Web de **justicereport.ca** à **ccja-acjp.ca**, un changement motivé par le décès de notre webmestre de longue date. Nous adressons nos sincères condoléances et nos remerciements à la famille d'Austin Taylor, qui a généreusement maintenu le site actif durant cette transition.

Chaque numéro de l'*Actualités Justice Report* (AJR) en 2025 mettra principalement en vedette des articles rédigés par des membres de l'ACJP, ainsi qu'un éclairage sur l'ACJP et ses organismes affiliés. Dans ce numéro (40.1), nous présentons le conseil d'administration et le personnel de l'ACJP, deux des neuf énoncés de principe — prévention du crime et sécurité des communautés, lesquels mettent en valeur des stratégies proactives de réduction de la criminalité — ainsi qu'une mise à jour sur l'Association de justice pénale du Manitoba, incluant un rapport du président Mike Cook sur le *Crime Prevention Breakfast* de l'AJPM, un événement annuel où des experts se réunissent pour discuter de solutions communautaires; le conférencier de 2024 était le Dr Robert (Bob) Christmas. Enfin, un concours de dissertation étudiante organisé par l'Association ontarienne de justice pénale nous rappelle comment les bouleversements économiques découlant d'une

possible guerre commerciale avec les États-Unis pourraient exercer une pression sur notre système de justice. Lisez-en davantage sur cette initiative et sur l'ACJO dans le prochain numéro (41.2) de l'AJR.

Également dans ce numéro, Howard Sapers, collaborateur de longue date du Justice Report et ancien président de l'UIS, revient avec une critique des unités d'intervention structurée, soulevant des préoccupations quant à l'utilisation excessive de l'isolement — particulièrement à l'égard des détenus autochtones — ainsi qu'au manque de supervision pour garantir un traitement humain.

Notre section *Contributions des jeunes chercheurs* présente cinq articles. Marcia Parker et Anna Ahenakew, étudiantes en travail social à First Nations University of Canada (FNU-SK), examinent les pavillons de ressourcement fédéraux et les pénitenciers à travers une étude de terrain et une entrevue avec un agent correctionnel. Devon Lucky Napope, étudiant en travail social à FNU-SK, partage son vécu du traumatisme intergénérationnel dans un puissant poème oral. La CCJA remercie la professeure Dr Sharon Acoose (First Nations University of Canada-SK) pour son soutien à ces contributions autochtones.

Carson Brody (B.A. en justice pénale), lauréat de la bourse MRU-CCJA 2024, mène une petite étude incluant l'analyse d'un débat sur Reddit concernant les caméras corporelles portées par les policiers. Son étude révèle un fort appui à leur usage, mais aussi une méfiance persistante envers la responsabilisation policière, soulignant le besoin de recherches approfondies sur les médias sociaux. Enfin, le criminologue Dr John Winterdyk, responsable des recensions de livres du *Justice Report*, présente les analyses de Holly Wood (M.A.) et Catharine Pandila (M.A.) sur *Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial* (Perron, 2024).

Nous espérons que ce numéro de l'*Actualités Justice Report* vous informera et vous inspirera!



# SPOTLIGHT ON CCJA - 2025



**The Canadian Criminal Justice Association (CCJA) was founded in 1919 and remains an independent national voluntary organization working for an improved criminal justice system in Canada.**

**L' Association canadienne de justice pénale (ACJP) est un organisme national volontaire voué à l'amélioration du système de justice pénale au Canada.**

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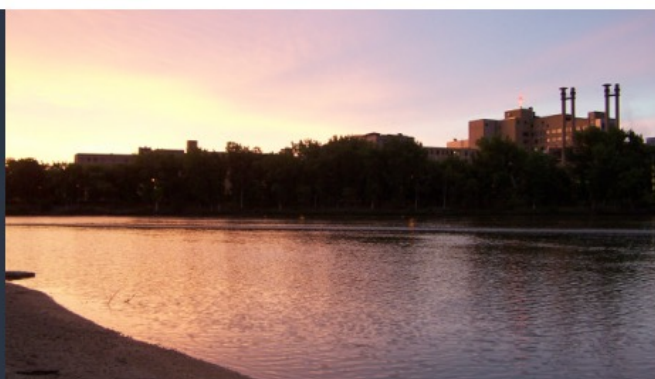
MANITOBA CRIMINAL JUSTICE ASSOCIATION  
ASSOCIATION DE JUSTICE PÉNALE DU MANITOBA

## SPOTLIGHT ON MCJA - 2025

### Manitoba Criminal Justice Association

Increasing public awareness and understanding of current issues in the Canadian criminal justice system

[Register For The Crime Prevention Breakfast!](#)



The Manitoba Criminal Justice Association (MCJA) promotes informed debate to foster a humane, equitable, and effective justice system. Its diverse membership includes police officers, lawyers, psychiatrists, government employees, and professionals from various fields, reflecting a range of educational, occupational, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.

Founded in November 1969 by four members of the Canadian Corrections Association, the MCJA began as the Manitoba Society of Criminology Inc., addressing the need for a multidisciplinary focus on corrections. Early interest confirmed the value of an organization uniting diverse perspectives within Manitoba's corrections system. A steering committee was formed to establish its structure.

The MCJA remains committed to incorporating views from all areas of the criminal justice system to address its challenges. As Manitoba's only interdisciplinary criminal justice forum, it fosters idea exchange among diverse professions and promotes public understanding. Its independence and non-partisan stance enable it to serve as a consultant to government and a bridge between justice professionals, agencies, and legislators.

### JUSTICE REPORT MOVES TO DIGITAL-ONLY FORMAT IN OCTOBER 2025

To support sustainability and manage rising printing and mailing costs, the CCJA's *Justice Report* will be available exclusively online—same content, easier access, smaller footprint.

The Justice Report has transitioned to a new digital home on the CCJA website:

[www.ccja-acjp.ca/pub/en/justice-report/](http://www.ccja-acjp.ca/pub/en/justice-report/)

### L'ACTUALITÉS JUSTICE SERA SEULEMENT PUBLIÉ EN LIGNE DÈS OCTOBRE 2025

Pour soutenir le développement durable et réduire les coûts d'impression et d'envoi, l'*Actualités Justice Report* de l'ACJP sera offert exclusivement en ligne — le même contenu, un accès simplifié et une empreinte réduite.

On a désormais une nouvelle plateforme numérique sur le site de l'ACJP :

[www.ccja-acjp.ca/pub/fr/justice-report/](http://www.ccja-acjp.ca/pub/fr/justice-report/)



# Manitoba Criminal Justice Association's 2024 Annual Crime Prevention Breakfast

## MIKE COOK

MCJA President and Criminal Defence Lawyer

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*The Manitoba Criminal Justice Association's 2024 Annual Crime Prevention Breakfast, held at the historic downtown Fort Garry Hotel, featured keynote speaker Dr. Bob Christmas, a retired Winnipeg Police Staff Sergeant and Team Lead for Winnipeg's Community Safety Team. Addressing downtown and transit violence, Dr. Bob discussed his unit's progress and expansion plans. The captivated audience of 200+ attendees applauded his dedication, and heartfelt thanks were extended for his commitment to community safety.*

November is Canada's National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month. The Province of Manitoba recognizes this annually with a proclamation and aligns with it by hosting our yearly Crime Prevention Breakfast with over 200 attendees. We gathered at the historic downtown Fort Garry Hotel for the 2024 event.

Our audience included judges from all three levels of our courts, as well as crown attorneys, defence lawyers, Winnipeg police officers and RCMP members, corrections officers, treatment center providers, mental health clinicians, probation services, parole services and the general public.

Our keynote speaker for 2024 was Dr. Bob Christmas. I had the distinct pleasure of introducing my friend of over 30 years—Dr Bob as I call him. Dr. Bob, formally just "Bob", has an amazing history. He dropped out of school in grade 11, entering the workforce as a construction worker. He enjoyed the work but always had a yearning to earn his grade 12 at some point. His education plan was put on hold as he started a new career at age 25. Bob became a Winnipeg police officer. He had a very well-respected career as a police officer. He retired in 2023 after 30 years with the Winnipeg police as a Staff Sergeant. During those 30 years of working full time, and raising a family, Bob quietly pursued his education. He first attained his grade 12, followed by a BA, an MA and then his doctorate, ergo, Dr. Bob. This was such an outstanding endeavour considering he was concurrently on many boards, including our MCJA.

Dr. Bob was a highly sought-after retiree due to his police experience and his education. He is now the Team Lead for the Community Safety Team, a special unit of the City of Winnipeg Chief Administrative Officer's office. This team was organized to address the violence in our downtown streets, with an emphasis on transit violence. Dr. Bob has a team of 30 dedicated Safety Officers who patrol downtown streets and ride the buses to ensure these conveyances are safe for transit drivers and the general public. The team is meeting with great success as the incidents of violence have decreased since their arrival. They worked closely with the Winnipeg Police and Emergency Services to ensure those in distress receive the appropriate help they need for addictions and mental health concerns.

At MCJA's Annual Crime Prevention Breakfast, Dr. Bob outlined the steps taken to date and the go-forward plans for his unit. He envisions the team growing in size and covering a larger geographical area. Street safety is a concern for all Canadian cities. We are fortunate to have Mayor Scott Gillingham and City Council allocate funding and resources for this proactive safety team. Dr. Bob is a popular speaker at various venues, illustrating what the City of Winnipeg is doing to answer the concerns of its citizens. Our MCJA audience was captivated by the new team and its mandate.

Thank you, Dr. Bob, for your inexhaustible drive and commitment to your new career. We, the people of Winnipeg, thank you.

# SPOTLIGHT ON CCJA - 2025

## POSITION PAPERS

## VIEWPOINTS

ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES



A COMPENDIUM  
OF POSITION PAPERS

THE COMPLETE VERSIONS OF CCJA'S NINE  
POSITION PAPERS ARE AVAILABLE AT:  
[WWW.CCJA-ACJP.CA](http://WWW.CCJA-ACJP.CA)

### KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE FROM CRIME

**Public Safety is best assured by laws anchored in research and based upon humane and equitable principles.**

Public safety is best achieved through laws grounded in research and guided by equitable, humane principles. The criminal justice system, which relies on extensive police, court, and correctional infrastructure, imposes significant financial and societal costs. Given its profound impact on lives and freedoms, governments must approach any expansion cautiously, ensuring changes are evidence-based, openly debated, and designed to minimize unintended consequences.

Harsh criminal sanctions have proven ineffective in enhancing community safety, often creating unnecessary costs and disproportionately impacting marginalized groups. These approaches divert resources from essential investments in education, social programs, and healthcare, which are more effective at fostering safe and healthy communities. Canada's incarceration rate, already among the highest in Western democracies, offers a cautionary parallel to the United States, where unsustainable incarceration levels have led to systemic failures.

Efforts should focus on prevention, early intervention, and accessible community programs, including counselling, education, and employment support. Reducing recidivism requires prioritizing evidence-based programs and improving collaboration between federal and provincial governments to align policies and share offender information. Given overburdened courts and increasing delays, we have long called for Parliament to initiate a comprehensive review of the criminal justice system and the Criminal Code. This will also require consulting provinces and NGOs to ensure reforms address systemic inefficiencies and foster equitable outcomes.

# ACCENT SUR L'ACJP - 2025

## ÉNONCÉS DE PRINCIPE

### POINTS DE VUE

SUR LES QUESTIONS RELIÉES  
À LA JUSTICE PÉNALE



### UNE COMPILATION D'ÉNONCÉS DE PRINCIPE

**TOUT AU LONG DE L'ANNÉE 2025, NOUS PRÉSENTERONS UN OU PLUSIEURS ÉNONCÉS AINSI QUE DES FAITS SAILLANTS DE NOS AFFILIÉS À TRAVERS LE CANADA.**

### PROTÉGER LES COLLECTIVITÉS CONTRE LA CRIMINALITÉ

**La meilleure façon d'assurer la sécurité publique est de se doter de lois ancrées dans la recherche et basées sur des principes humains et équitables.**

La sécurité publique repose sur des lois fondées sur la recherche et guidées par des principes humains et équitables. Le système de justice pénale, basé sur une vaste infrastructure policière, judiciaire et correctionnelle, engendre des coûts financiers et sociaux importants. Compte tenu de ses répercussions sur les droits humains et les libertés, les gouvernements doivent veiller à ce que toute expansion soit appuyée par des preuves empiriques, débattue ouvertement et conçue pour limiter les conséquences imprévues.

Les sanctions pénales sévères se sont avérées inefficaces pour améliorer la sécurité des collectivités. Elles génèrent des coûts inutiles, touchent de manière disproportionnée les groupes marginalisés et détournent des ressources essentielles d'investissements dans l'éducation, les soins de santé et les programmes sociaux, qui contribuent davantage à des communautés sûres. Avec un taux d'incarcération parmi les plus élevés des démocraties occidentales, le Canada fait face à des défis similaires à ceux des États-Unis, où l'incarcération massive a provoqué des échecs systémiques.

Il est crucial de prioriser la prévention, l'intervention précoce et des programmes communautaires accessibles, comme le counselling, l'éducation et l'emploi. Réduire la récidive exige des approches fondées sur des preuves et une collaboration accrue entre les gouvernements fédéral et provinciaux. Depuis longtemps, nous avons recommandé un examen exhaustif du système de justice pénale et du Code criminel par le parlement. De plus, une concertation avec les provinces et ONGs, est essentiel pour corriger les inefficacités systémiques et promouvoir l'équité.

# VIEWPOINTS

## ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES

### CRIME PREVENTION

**Crime prevention that is community based and focuses on addressing the underlying causes of crime should be seen as the primary approach in fighting crime.**

Governments allocate significant portions of criminal justice budgets to correctional institutions, further increasing spending on prisons. This prioritization reduces investments in community-based preventive initiatives, which are more effective at reducing recidivism. Greater resources should focus on researching and evaluating effective programs and fostering federal-provincial collaboration to create a cohesive justice system, including improved offender information sharing.

Early intervention for at-risk youth through accessible community programs—such as counseling, parenting, education, and employment support—is vital. Integrated delivery across health, education, and justice systems, as well as diversion measures, can prevent justice system entry, promote accountability, and encourage community involvement, including volunteer participation. Public and offender awareness must be increased. Offenders should face the harm caused, fostering accountability and reducing fear of crime. When imprisonment is necessary, it should be humane and rehabilitative, with effective risk assessments, tailored programming for groups like women and Indigenous offenders, and supervised release plans.

The Daubney (1988) and Horner (1994) Reports emphasized the role of education in addressing criminal behavior and prevention. As crime prevention and rehabilitation are key to public safety, the CCJA has often recommended prioritizing these areas with increased funding.

# POINTS DE VUE

## SUR LES QUESTIONS RELIÉES À LA JUSTICE PÉNALE

### PREVENTION DU CRIME COMMUNAUTAIRE

**La prévention du crime communautaire, centrée sur les causes sous-jacentes de la criminalité, devrait être considérée comme l'approche principale pour lutter contre la criminalité.**

Les gouvernements consacrent des portions importantes des budgets de justice pénale aux établissements correctionnels, accroissant les dépenses liées aux prisons. Cette priorité réduit les investissements dans des initiatives préventives communautaires, qui s'avèrent pourtant plus efficaces pour réduire les taux de récidive. Il faut renforcer la recherche, évaluer les programmes efficaces et favoriser une collaboration fédérale-provinciale pour un système de justice cohérent et une meilleure gestion des délinquants.

Une intervention précoce pour les jeunes à risque, avec des programmes accessibles comme le counseling et le soutien parental, est cruciale. Une prestation intégrée de ces programmes dans les systèmes de santé, d'éducation et de justice est nécessaire, tout comme des mesures de déjudiciarisation pour prévenir l'entrée dans le système judiciaire, promouvoir la responsabilisation et encourager l'implication communautaire, y compris celle des bénévoles. Sensibiliser à la fois la population et les délinquants est crucial. Ces derniers devraient affronter leurs torts pour renforcer leur responsabilisation et réduire la peur du crime. En cas de nécessité d'incarcération, celle-ci devrait être humaine et axée sur la réhabilitation, incluant des évaluations des risques, des programmes adaptés (en particulier pour les femmes et les délinquants autochtones) et une libération supervisée et graduelle.

Les rapports Daubney (1988) et Horner (1994) ont insisté sur l'importance de l'éducation pour comprendre et prévenir les comportements criminels. La prévention et la réhabilitation étant essentielles à la sécurité publique, l'ACJP a souvent recommandé que les prioriser avec un financement accru.

# Structured Intervention Units and the Independent Advisory Panel – The Limits of Oversight

**HOWARD SAPERS**

Former Chair, Structured Intervention Units Implementation Advisory Panel

*As discussed in this article by the now former SIU-IAP Chair Howard Sapers, over its three-year mandate the SIU Implementation Advisory Panel (SIU-IAP) independent oversight body has identified persistent solitary-like practices within the Structured Intervention Units (SIU) system designed to replace administrative segregation as a result of legislated changes made by Bill C-83 (2019). The bill's promise of transformational change has been undermined by the fact that many SIUs operate in former segregation units. In 2021, Senator Kim Pate—a vocal critic of C-83—introduced Bill S-230 ("Tona's Law"), which aims to incorporate judicial oversight for isolation beyond 48 hours, community-based alternatives, and stronger accountability into the SIU system. The bill was passed in the Senate in December 2024 and awaits approval by the House. According to Sapers, while not all stakeholders agree with every clause of Bill S-230, consensus is growing on the need for corrections reform from a culture of unaccountability to one of legality.*

The Structured Intervention Units Implementation Advisory Panel (SIU IAP) was established in 2021 to monitor the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) response to Charter of Rights and Freedoms violations identified by the courts in relation to the use of segregation and solitary confinement practices in federal prisons. The Panel's reports reveal CSC's struggle to operate SIUs in a manner that best reflects the primary reason for their creation — the elimination of the unconstitutional solitary-like conditions for prisoners removed from the mainstream population. The IAP has played an essential role in overseeing and reporting about the Structured Intervention Unit (SIU) system and provided a series of recommendations over its three-year mandate. The recommendations have focused on the legal and safe operation of these new places of isolated confinement. Despite this focus, SIUs have been found to be non-compliant with their legislative and policy framework. This finding has been consistent and shared in several reports sent to the Correctional Service of Canada and the Minister of Public Safety. To date, little has been done to address the non-compliance.

In a three-part series (2022-23) for the *Justice Report*, Howard Sapers examined [1] the history of segregation in Canada and the introduction of Structured Intervention Units [JR 37.4]; [2] how the first 18 months of SIU operation failed to meet legislative expectations (JR 38.1); and, [3] flaws in the new system's implementation, based on the 2021/22 SIU IAP Annual Report and responses from CSC and the Minister of Public Safety (JR 38.4).

[www.ccja-acjp.ca/pub/en/justice-report/](http://www.ccja-acjp.ca/pub/en/justice-report/)

The SIU model separates prisoners from the mainstream population for their own safety, for the safety of others, or to support the integrity of an ongoing investigation. The Panel has found that the justification for most of the transfers was that allowing the prisoner to stay in the mainstream population would jeopardize their safety. Policy dictating the operation of SIU directs that all alternates to SIU transfer must be explored and rejected first, that once placed in an SIU, the stay should be as short as possible, and that while housed



in an SIU, prisoners must be offered a minimum of 4 hours outside of their cell every day. At least 2 of those 4 hours are to provide the opportunity for meaningful human contact.

Using CSC data, the Panel has found that stays in SIUs can be as long (or longer) as stays in the former Administrative Segregation units. The Panel recorded many SIU stays lasting over two months — at least 20% for each of the five time periods studied by the Panel (January 2020 to 30 June 2024). This is concerning, as it shows that the SIU regime has not significantly improved over the past 4.5 years of operation.

Prolonged stays in SIUs (those over 15 days) are more common for Indigenous and Black prisoners, with no consistent, meaningful changes recorded over time. Long stays in isolating conditions of confinement are known to be harmful and are discouraged by the governing legislation. Those facing mental health challenges tend to spend similar or longer periods of time in SIUs compared to those without such challenges.

The CSC has failed to abolish solitary-like confinement in federal prisons, with over half of prisoners not receiving their 4 hours out of cell in over three-quarters of their stay. This lack of compliance flies in the face of the two (B.C. and Ontario) Court of Appeal decisions which prohibited the practice of indefinite isolating confinement of more than 20 hours per day locked in cell. CSC's data shows that many SIU prisoners do not receive close to four hours daily out of their cells. The governing legislation--Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA) amended under Bill C-83 (2019), emphasizes that the law only requires prisoners to be presented with "opportunities" or "offers" to have 4 hours out of their cells daily, but the nature of these offers and reasons behind their rejection are not adequately evaluated. The failure to meet minimum expectations for timeout of cell is a key reason the Panel has concluded that SIU regime has not accomplished its goal of abolishing solitary confinement-like conditions of confinement.

## **OVERSIGHT UNDERMINED: LACK OF TRANSPARENCY BY CSC, NON-BINDING RECOMMENDATIONS AND FLAWED REVIEW PROCESSES**

The first truly independent review, by Independent External Decision Makers (IEDMs), of the length of an SIU stay takes place after 60 days. To conduct these reviews, IEDMs rely on information provided by CSC, raising concerns about independence and information sharing. CCRA s37.71(1) requires IEDMs to provide prisoners with a written summary of the information they have considered and to ensure all prisoners have an opportunity to make written representations. The Implementation Advisory Panel has found these provisions are inadequate to ensure administrative fairness.

In over a third of the cases reviewed by IEDMs that resulted in an order to transfer a prisoner out of an SIU, those prisoners actually stayed in SIUs longer than those ordered to remain in their SIU cell. This raises questions about the legitimacy of the oversight system and its ability to shorten stays.

Access to decisions is almost non-existent, and it is unclear whether these decisions can be made public through Access to Information requests and where (i.e., CSC, PSC, or IEDMs) to even send such requests. It is difficult to trust a process that is supposed to provide "independent oversight" when the process itself and the logic behind each decision are not open to scrutiny.

## **MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES, REGIONAL INEQUITIES, AND SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INDIGENOUS AND BLACK PRISONERS IN SIU OPERATIONS**

Indigenous and Black prisoners are over-represented in the population of prisoners who are transferred into SIUs. The SIU population also tends to be younger than the general population. Despite recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and other bodies, progress in addressing systemic discrimination remains slow, suggesting a disconnect between accountability

measures and meaningful systemic change. To ensure fair treatment of Black and Indigenous prisoners, CSC must be specific about how it monitors and addresses racism and discriminatory outcomes within its institutions, what specific actions are taken in response to allegations of racism, and the measures in place to address the systemic discrimination within corrections.

Prisoners with mental health needs are more likely to be placed in SIUs, with 13.1% of prisoners rating them as having "some need" and 6.1% having "considerable or higher" need. Those with deteriorating mental health have tended to be kept in SIUs longer than others, and at least a third of their SIU stays involved prolonged stays and little time out of cell.

The operation of SIUs has shown significant regional variations, with 76.3% of prisoners not receiving their minimum 4 hours out of cell in over 75% of their days in the Pacific region and only 27.1% in the Prairie region. There is no evidence that the gap between the worst and the best SIUs is closing.

### **INADEQUATE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CSC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR SIUs LEADS TO INCOMPLETE OR MISLEADING REPORTING**

Correctional Service of Canada developed its own set of performance indicators to monitor SIUs. The Panel has found these measures to be poorly conceptualized resulting in incomplete or misleading performance reporting. Serious thought needs to be given to what data is collected and how it is used. What we do know is that SIUs are not yet operating in an acceptable fashion, and there is no indication of improvement.

The Panel's work on the implementation of SIUs has been limited due to the lack of information about solitary-like conditions of confinement experienced by prisoners in Canada's penitentiaries. The Panel has received administrative data from CSC, which provides systematic information about the operation of only SIUs. Other cell placement that restricts

movement and association of prisoners is not routinely monitored, reported, or subject to external oversight. Information on these other places of isolating cell placement needs to be collected and shared if one is truly interested in and concerned about the practice of solitary-like confinement.

The current legislation does not guarantee time out of cell; it focuses only on "offers" to prisoners to be unlocked. The amended law also fails to provide for effective and efficient external oversight. In addition, most SIUs are operationalized in former segregation units, which undermines the notion that the Units would fuel the transformational change promised by the government when the amendments were introduced.

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

To produce correctional outcomes that support public safety and legality behind prison walls, adequate monitoring of the isolation of prisoners anywhere in any CSC institution is necessary. The problems with the SIUs reflect and are intimately linked to the operation of the penitentiary as a whole. Many of the problems faced by certain groups in the SIUs, such as Indigenous and Black prisoners, and those facing mental health challenges, are not just "SIU problems."

While Canada has made strides in creating oversight frameworks and implementing legislative reforms, correctional accountability remains inconsistent and ambivalent. Systemic barriers, implementation gaps, lack of political will, and resistance to change hinder efforts to ensure transparency, equity, and justice in corrections. Even the legislatively promised 5-year review of Bill C-83 has been ignored. Bridging this accountability gap requires stronger enforcement mechanisms, greater transparency, and a commitment to addressing systemic inequities, particularly for marginalized populations.

Correctional accountability in Canada can be described as ambivalent, marked by significant challenges in achieving transparency, consistency, and justice within the correctional system. While

Canada has established oversight mechanisms to foster accountability, systemic issues and implementation gaps often undermine their effectiveness. This ambivalence is especially evident in areas such as segregation reform, systemic discrimination, and responses to oversight recommendations.

When introduced in 2019, the legislative reforms in Bill C-83 were criticized by some for failing to effectively address the problems identified with the unconstitutional use of Administrative Segregation. During C-83's second reading in the Senate, Senator Kim Pate—a longtime advocate for prison reform—clearly stated her concerns that the Bill did not go far enough and amounts “to an unconstitutional renaming and perpetuation of segregation”. The legislative proposal did not have mechanisms that would ensure the prevention of isolating conditions that “amount to torture” (Senate, 2019<sup>1</sup>). Senator Pate's critiques of C-83 are consistent with many of the SIU IAPs subsequent findings.

Senator Pate introduced Bill S-230 in the Senate of Canada, which aims to end practices of isolation in federal prisons and is short-titled the "Providing Alternatives to Isolation and Ensuring Oversight and Remedies in the Correctional System Act" (Tona's Law)<sup>2</sup>. Tona, an Indigenous woman who endured over a decade of prison, mainly in segregated confinement, resulting in a mental health diagnosis of isolation-induced schizophrenia (Senate, 2019), The Bill seeks to reform Canada's correctional system by enhancing oversight and preventing human rights abuses. It proposes judicial oversight for isolation lasting more than 48 hours, community-based alternatives to incarceration, and stronger accountability mechanisms. While the bill passed the Senate in 2024, it awaits further consideration in the House of Commons, reflecting ongoing efforts to address systemic problems in Canadian prisons.

While not all observers support each clause of Bill S-230, there is a growing consensus that something must be done to dismantle the culture of impunity in corrections and replace it with a culture of legality.

#### NOTES

1. Senate of Canada. (2019, May 2). Debates of the Senate: Volume 150, Issue 283. 1st Session, 42nd Parliament. [https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/chamber/421/debates/283db\\_2019-05-02-e#50](https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/chamber/421/debates/283db_2019-05-02-e#50)

2. Pate, K. (2021). Bill S-230: Providing Alternatives to Isolation and Ensuring Oversight and Remedies in the Correctional System Act (Tona's Law). Senate of Canada. <https://sencanada.ca/en/senators/pate-kim/interventions/566888/40>

## RÉSUMÉ

### Structured Intervention Units and the Independent Advisory Panel – The Limits of Oversight

#### HOWARD SAPERS

Ancien président du Comité consultatif sur la mise en œuvre des unités d'intervention structurées

Comme le souligne Howard Sapers, ancien président du Comité consultatif sur la mise en œuvre des unités d'intervention structurée (CCMO UIS), cet organisme indépendant de surveillance a, durant son mandat de trois ans, identifié des pratiques persistantes semblables à l'isolement au sein du système des unités d'intervention structurée (UIS), conçu pour remplacer l'isolement administratif selon les modifications législatives du projet de loi C-83 (2019). La promesse de changement transformationnel du projet de loi a été compromise par le fait que de nombreuses UIS fonctionnent dans d'anciennes unités d'isolement. En 2021, la sénatrice Kim Pate, critique ouverte du C-83, a présenté le projet de loi S-230 (Loi Tona), visant une supervision judiciaire après 48 heures, des alternatives communautaires et une responsabilisation accrue dans les UIS. Le projet de loi a été adopté par le Sénat en décembre 2024 et attend l'approbation de la Chambre. Selon Sapers, bien que tous les intervenants ne s'entendent pas sur chaque clause du projet de loi S-230, un consensus croissant appelle à réformer le système correctionnel, passant d'une culture d'irresponsabilité à une culture de légalité.

The CCJA congratulates Carson Broda, recipient of the 2024 Mount Royal University (MRU) scholarship. As part of this achievement, Carson receives a CCJA student membership from the Department of Economics, Justice, and Policy Studies (Mount Royal University) and the opportunity to publish a condensed, article-style version of the winning Honours paper, *Community Perceptions on Reddit Toward Police Body-Worn Cameras in Canada*.

# Community Perceptions on Reddit Toward Police Body-Worn Cameras in Canada

**CARSON BRODA**

BA in Criminal Justice (Class of 2025), Mount Royal University, Calgary, AB

*Imagine a world where every police encounter is recorded, where there is no room for ‘he said, she said’—just cold, hard footage. For years, body-worn cameras (BWCs) have been proposed as the solution to police misconduct, lack of accountability, and public distrust. But do they actually make a difference? And more importantly, how do people feel about them? While policymakers and researchers have debated the issue, another group has been actively discussing it: Reddit users, known for their candid and often unfiltered discussions. A study by the author set out to explore how Reddit users in Canada perceive BWCs and police accountability. The results paint a nuanced picture—BWCs are widely supported, but skepticism toward police remains. Although based on a single Reddit thread, this study offers intriguing insights into Canadian views on BWCs and highlights the need for broader research using Reddit and similar platforms.*

## INTRODUCTION: PUBLIC DISCOURSE ON BWCs IN CANADA

In light of recent acts of social injustice—such as the deaths of George Floyd and Regis Korchinski-Paquet—and increased scrutiny of law enforcement practices, discussion around the implementation of body-worn cameras (BWCs) has intensified. However, the perceptions of this technology among online social media groups in Canada, particularly on Reddit, remain understudied. Reddit is a major online discussion platform where users debate and discuss a wide range of social issues, including policing and surveillance technology. The study presented in this article examines how some Reddit users in a major Canadian city perceive police and the role of BWCs in police accountability. Through content and thematic analysis of a Reddit thread<sup>1</sup>, this article examines the complex perspectives on BWCs, revealing strong support for their implementation while highlighting ongoing skepticism toward law enforcement accountability.

## THE RISE OF BWCs IN POLICING

Body-worn cameras (BWCs) are recording devices worn by law enforcement officers to collect audiovisual records of interactions with the public to serve as evidence and promote accountability (Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 2015). Calls for the widespread adoption of BWCs have intensified following high-profile incidents of police misconduct, such as the deaths of George Floyd and Regis Korchinski-Paquet (Saulnier et al., 2021).

Although BWC adoption remains limited in Canada, its use is on the rise. Agencies such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Toronto Police Service have begun incorporating BWCs, and Alberta has announced a mandate requiring all officers to wear them (Cummings, 2023; Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2023; Toronto Police Service, 2023). As more BWCs are called into action, understanding the public reception surrounding this technology is essential.

1. The study upon which this article is based is limited by its small sample (a single Reddit thread) and potential misinterpretations of tone and context in online discussions. Future research should include multiple platforms to better capture community perceptions of BWCs and policing in Canada.

## PUBLIC SUPPORT VS. IMPLEMENTATION CHANGES

The increased demand for this technology is evident worldwide, such as in the US where, since 2016, an estimated 47% of law enforcement agencies have employed the use of BWCs. In Canada, the use of BWCs has been expanding but remains inconsistent across jurisdictions. In Canada, where 36% of law enforcement agencies have considered or trialed the use of this technology since 2019 (Saulnier et al., 2021), although inconsistently across jurisdictions. One possible reason for Canada's reduced adoption could be that the use of force and associated public complaints are far less prevalent in Canada than in the US (Laming, 2019).

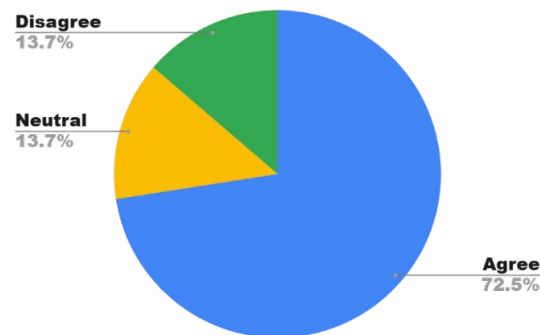
Based on the literature review conducted during the author's study, the implementation of BWC technology is perceived extremely positively by Canadians. The Toronto Police Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) have begun implementing BWCs, and Alberta has announced a mandate requiring all officers to wear them (Cummings, 2023; Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2023; Toronto Police Service, 2023). Despite this increasing adoption, public perceptions of BWCs, particularly as discussed on social media platforms like Reddit, remain underexplored. As well, public discourse on platforms like Reddit suggests that perceptions of BWCs and trust in law enforcement are separate issues.

This study employed a phenomenological approach to explore community perceptions of a cohort of Reddit users in Canada. An unobtrusive research method was chosen to analyze user discussions without influencing responses. Reddit was selected for its extensive user base and candid discussions, making it an ideal platform for examining unfiltered public sentiment. A purposive sampling method was used to select a relevant discussion thread about BWCs and Canadian policing. To search for a thread that fit these criteria, I used the search terms "Canadian," "discussion," "body cams," "body-worn camera," "perceptions," "opinions," and "police." The selected thread contained over 500 comments, of which 50 top-level comments were analyzed using content and thematic analysis to identify the key themes.

## FINDINGS: REDDIT USERS' VIEWS ON BWCs

As shown in Figure 1, categorizing the data set found that 72.5% supported the use of BWCs by police, with 13.7% of comments expressing agreement and another 13.7% remaining neutral. As shown in Figure 2, sentiments toward police were categorized as positive, negative, and neutral and key themes were identified to provide insight into the community's perceptions. With 34% of comments categorized as negative and 20% positive, the analysis revealed that most Reddit users support BWCs, but their trust in the police remains divided. This aligns with existing literature indicating strong public approval of BWCs. However, Reddit discussions provided additional insights into concerns about the implementation and oversight of this technology.

Although BWCs were widely supported, attitudes



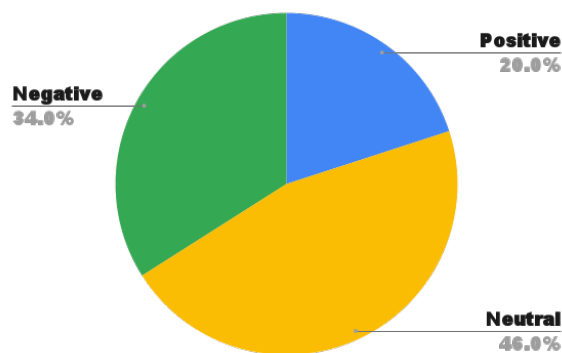
**Figure 1**  
*Should Police Wear BWCs?*

Note: Although these results are based on a single Reddit thread, this study offers intriguing insights into Canadian views on BWCs and highlights the need for broader research.

Source: Author's original elaboration, 2024.

toward police were mixed as shown in Figure 2. Only 20% of comments were positive about law enforcement, while 34% were negative, and 46% were neutral. This suggests that while BWCs are seen as beneficial, they do not necessarily improve trust in policing.





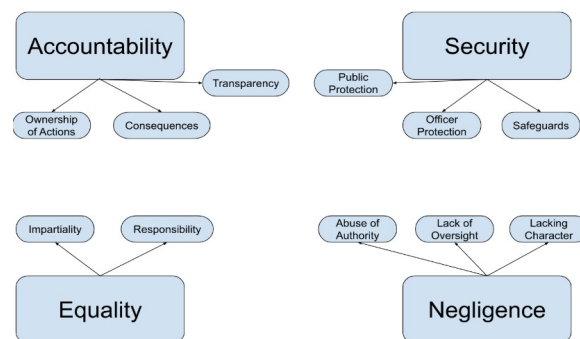
**Figure 2**  
Sentiments Towards Police

Note: Although these results are based on a single Reddit thread, this study offers intriguing insights into Canadian views on BWCs and highlights the need for broader research.

Source: Author's original elaboration, 2024.

## THEMATIC ANALYSIS: KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step<sup>2</sup> thematic analysis, I identified key themes by first generating initial codes such as 'lack of accountability,' 'footage,' and 'power imbalance.' These were then refined into broader themes, including accountability, protection, authority, and impartiality. Following further analysis, themes that were too broad or narrow were adjusted, resulting in four finalized themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006): accountability, protection, authority, law enforcement reform, and impartiality. As shown in Figure 3, with these initial themes as the foundation, Braun and Clarke's (2006) fourth step was used to refine them into the following broader themes: accountability, security, negligence, and equality. The essence of each theme was then identified according to Braun and Clarke's fifth step. As shown in Figure 3, I defined the first theme, accountability, as a recognition of the actions of others and a demand for liability, security as a means of protecting others and keeping them safe, negligence as the misuse of power and involving issues such as malpractice and corruption; lastly, the theme of fairness was defined as the demand for equal treatment between all involved parties.



**Figure 3**  
Thematic Analysis Based of Four Main Themes with Sub-Themes

Note: Accountability: Holding both police officers and civilians responsible for their actions; Security: Enhancing public and officer safety through surveillance; Negligence: Addressing concerns about footage tampering and improper use of BWCs; Fairness: Debating whether surveillance should extend beyond law enforcement.

Source: Author's original elaboration, 2024.

## DISCUSSION: BALANCING ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

A dominant theme in the discussion was accountability. Many users viewed BWCs as a tool to hold both police officers and civilians responsible for their actions. One Reddit user in the study stated that use of a BWC holds officers accountable for their interactions with the public...*and it holds the public accountable for actions and accusations against officers.* The idea that BWCs could serve as an impartial witness in disputes was widely supported. Reddit users' comments also emphasized the role of BWCs in promoting security. Some saw the cameras as protection for officers against false accusations, while others felt safer knowing that interactions with police were recorded. Comments such as *'It's liability protection for everyone'* highlighted this theme. These findings remain consistent with other findings in the literature on the perceived benefits of BWCs, such as increased trust, security, accountability, and transparency in police equipped with this technology (Laming, 2019). It is also consistent with findings around recognizing police corruption and malpractice and how this technology is perceived to alleviate such concerns (Demir, 2019).

2. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis involves familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, identifying potential themes, refining these themes, defining and naming them, and finally producing the analytic report.

On the other hand, despite the perceived benefits, some users raised concerns about the effectiveness of BWCs. A recurring issue was the potential for officers to turn off their cameras or tamper with footage. One user questioned, *‘What’s stopping them from shutting off the camera when they want to?’* These concerns suggest that while BWCs are seen as a step toward accountability, their effectiveness depends on proper oversight. Some users highlighted issues of fairness, arguing that surveillance should not be applied solely to law enforcement but in every workplace. Others argued that “If my employer has security cameras...[in] my workplace, cops should too.” Implementing BWCs could create a sense of commonality and shared responsibility, underscoring the broader conversation about the role of surveillance in society and the need for equitable accountability.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

The findings of the author’s study contribute to growing public support for BWCs and their role in policing while underscoring the importance of proper implementation and oversight. Much like the newly announced mandate for BWCs across Albertan police agencies, the findings of this present study based on a sample population from Reddit highlight the need for future research analyzing multiple Reddit discussions, exploring other online platforms, and comparing findings with survey data. Such subsequent research into online social media spaces could assist in voicing the demands of those previously unheard and help to mandate this technology in other provinces and possibly nationwide (Cummings, 2023). The concerns raised about footage control and fairness highlight areas that require further attention. Policymakers should consider these concerns when developing BWC policies, while also ensuring mechanisms are in place to prevent misuse.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study, which is limited by its small sample size and other factors, explored Reddit users’ perceptions of BWCs and their impact on police accountability. While BWCs received overwhelmingly support, skepticism toward policing remained, as did concerns about officer control over footage and fairness of surveillance. The Reddit discussions highlight the need for independent oversight. As Canada continues expanding BWC implementation,

addressing public concerns will be critical to ensuring their effectiveness. After all, what good is a camera if it can be turned off when it matters most?

The author calls for future research that examines multiple Reddit discussions and including other online platforms to gain a perspective on how different communities perceive BWCs and the broader implications for policing in Canada.

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## RÉSUMÉ

### Community Perceptions of Reddit Towards Police Body-worn Cameras in Canada

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Imaginez un monde où chaque interaction avec la police est enregistrée, où il n'y a plus de place pour les divergences de témoignages—seulement des images brutes et irréfutables. Depuis des années, les caméras portatives (CP) sont présentées comme la solution aux fautes policières, au manque de responsabilité et à la méfiance du public. Mais changent-elles réellement la donne? Et surtout, comment sont-elles perçues? Tandis que les décideurs et chercheurs débattent du sujet, un autre groupe en discute activement : les utilisateurs de Reddit, connus pour leurs échanges directs et souvent sans filtre. Une étude menée par l'auteur a exploré l'opinion des Canadiens sur Reddit à propos des CP et de leur impact sur la perception de la police. Les résultats dressent un portrait nuancé : les CP sont largement soutenues, mais la méfiance envers la police demeure. Bien que fondée sur un seul fil Reddit, cette étude apporte un éclairage intéressant sur l'opinion canadienne et souligne la nécessité de recherches plus approfondies.



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# Culture of Corrections

**MARCIA PARKER**

Student of Indigenous Social Work at First Nations University of Canada (Class of 2027)

**ANNA AHENAKEW**

Student of Indigenous Social Work at First Nations University of Canada (Class of 2025)

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*This article is based on a pilot study conducted by and comprising the student-authors' research and observations in a provincial court and two federal correctional facilities in Saskatchewan: An Indigenous Healing Lodge and a federal Penitentiary. Both the Willow Cree Healing Lodge and the Saskatchewan (aka Prince Albert) Federal Penitentiary are operated by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) under federal guidelines. The Healing Lodge integrates Indigenous culture into all aspects of the facility's operations, emphasizing holistic support and rehabilitation. In contrast, the penitentiary recalls the colonial retribution system, with its marked lack of culture and support. The authors call for the rapid implementation of the TRC (2015) Calls to Action, especially those related to the creation of enhanced access to healing lodges.*

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The stark overrepresentation of Indigenous people in correctional facilities underscores the need for culturally informed interventions not currently provided. This is true in Canada's federal prisons (i.e., sentences of more than 2 years) and provincial and territorial jails (i.e., 2 years less a day). Cultural support in prisons is a key form of crime prevention, essential to reducing recidivism and addressing the root causes of incarceration. Without appropriate support, too many Indigenous (and other) inmates re-offend, perpetuating cycles of re-incarceration.

At both the federal and provincial levels, the Canadian criminal justice system faces significant challenges in effectively supporting the rehabilitation and social re-insertion of prisoners. This is especially true of Indigenous individuals, who are severely overrepresented in Canadian prisons and jails. Despite research efforts into Indigenous justice—including the Interim Report (TRC, 2015) and the findings and Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015) to address the systemic inequities — rehabilitation programs and cultural interventions remain inadequate in many correctional facilities. You can't help but notice this when observing and comparing the operations

of Prince Albert Penitentiary and Willow Cree Healing Lodge in Saskatchewan.

The lack of support needed to help inmates become active participants in society was obvious at Prince Albert Federal Penitentiary. At Willow Cree Healing Lodge, one could plainly see how inmates gain cultural values (i.e., Indigenous traditions, beliefs, and practices) that empower by giving "inmates" confidence, self-worth, and identity—sometimes for the first time in their lives. The goal of the healing lodge is to stop reoffending, change the stigma surrounding Indigenous offenders, and break the generational cycle of offending. Willow Cree Healing Lodge and SK Federal Penitentiary are both managed by the Correctional Service of Canada and operated under the same federal guidelines, but they differ profoundly in approach.

Where the penitentiary adheres to a colonial framework characterized by minimal cultural or rehabilitative support, healing lodges weave Indigenous culture into both structure and framework, focusing on holistic rehabilitation and appropriate community support. While this arguably helps explain the respective success rates

(Brown and Sagolj, 2019; CSC, 2023), the number of Indigenous people who are eligible for healing lodge placements remains limited and the broader realities of Indigenous incarceration in Canada remain deeply concerning.

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) saw a growing overrepresentation of Indigenous offenders in the federal system in 2020/2021: "Indigenous adult females accounted for 42% of female custody admissions, while Indigenous adult males accounted for 30% of male custody admissions." Nearly 1 in 10 Indigenous men aged 25-34 experienced incarceration during the two years (StatsCan, 2023). Indigenous overrepresentation in federal prisons had increased by 43.4 per cent between 2010 and 2021 (Zinger in CBC, January 2021). This was well after the 2012 release of the TRC Interim Report.

Statistics Canada's Over-Representation Index for Indigenous people was 8.9—about nine times higher than for non-Indigenous people in provincial facilities—it was highest in Saskatchewan, at 17.7. Indigenous women faced even greater overrepresentation in provincial facilities, at 15.4 times higher than non-Indigenous women, compared to 8.4 times for men. While incarceration rates declined for both groups in 2020/2021 (18% for Indigenous and 27% for non-Indigenous) related to the effects of the pandemic, over-representation increased by 14% from the previous year (Robinson et al, 2023<sup>1</sup>). According to the 2-year study on Indigenous over-representation in the correctional system, Saskatchewan has the highest rate.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE COURTS

Anna and I (Marcia) spent a morning in provincial court to observe the functioning of the justice system, and most of the cases we saw involved Indigenous men. The court dealt with everything from petty crimes to felony charges being reviewed that morning, including a sentencing hearing with a Gladue report. A Gladue Report is a pre-sentencing

and bail hearing report that a Canadian court is supposed to request when considering sentencing an offender of Indigenous background under Section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code<sup>2</sup>.

Gladue factors include lived traumas, like surviving residential schools and related loss of Indigenous identity; anti-Indigenous experiences in child welfare and justice systems; racism; and experiencing poverty or witnessing physical or sexual violence and associated drug or alcohol misuse and other manifestations of intergenerational trauma. Four (32-36) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, (TRC CTAs, 2015) focus on how "Mental health and trauma intersects with justice for Indigenous peoples."

Seeing how fast the court system moves through the cases was an eye-opener. Most cases were heard and processed within minutes. Sometimes it was hard to even follow from one case to the next. Ticking boxes and signing documents took precedence over any human connection. The judge seemed disassociated from seeing or hearing the defendant's side of the story, as the Prosecutor and Defence attorneys had already agreed about the charges and case outcomes. The judge seemed to be playing a procedural role, more of a formality, and didn't need to intervene or make any recommendations, as the court officials had already followed the steps of the judicial system for sentencing.

## HOW COGNITIVE SCIENCE MIGHT BE SHAPING JUSTICE

From the perspective of Cognitive Processing Theory (Vinney, 2024), which examines how individuals process and respond to information, the court's rigid structure and standardized procedures may limit the accused's ability to understand, interpret, and respond to legal proceedings. Additionally, Cognitive Flexibility Theory (Krems, 2014), which emphasizes adaptive problem solving and responsiveness, suggests that such a rigid structure and standardized procedures limit adaptability and critical thinking among judges, lawyers, or defendants. In one case, however, a Gladue Report was presented by the defendant's lawyer, which allowed the defendant's voice to be heard. The judge did consider this during sentencing. Yet, 25 years after the implementation of Gladue, Indigenous incarceration rates continue to

1. Robinson et al.'s Juristat article presents data and information from the Canadian Correctional Services Survey (CCSS) on the extent of Indigenous over-representation in correctional systems across Canada in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021. It uses three new corrections indicators: The incarceration Rate for Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons, the Over-Representation Index, and the Custodial Involvement Rate. It also explores trends in the use of bail and remand, including possible impacts on over-representation. These CCSS findings are from five provinces: Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Nova Scotia.

2. The Supreme Court of Canada emphasized the importance of considering an Indigenous offender's background in sentencing with *R v. Gladue* (1999) and reinforced these principles in *R v. Ipeelee* (2012). These rulings addressed the ongoing disregard for Section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code, introduced in the 1996 Bill C-41, highlighting systemic issues in the justice system and what the courts were supposed to do about it (StatsCan, 2023).



rise. Gladue principles are unevenly applied across the country, which is inline with the major lack of resources to examine the unique circumstances of those who encounter the justice system.

It seemed impossible to believe that the judge had thoroughly reviewed all the cases. She relied on the lawyers from both sides to negotiate plea deals or arrangements for their clients before the court date, simply approving the agreements presented. This left no room for any talk about rehabilitation or preventative measures to ensure the defendant did not re-offend. We watched as the Crown Prosecutor make a mistake and had to ask the Judge to go back and reopen a file because he had failed to document important information about the proceeding. Had he not caught this error, it could have impacted the case outcome negatively. This shows how quickly things move and that mistakes impacting justice for either side of the courtroom can happen so easily. What we witnessed didn't feel like justice being served in a humanistic way. It was very structured and templated, perhaps evidencing how capitalist-based our justice system really is.

## **INTERVIEWS WITH STAFF**

### Provincial Facility

Marcia interviewed Rosa, a provincial corrections officer in a women's integration unit. Some of the most significant feedback she gave was that a consistent staffing crisis in corrections impacts the inmate's ability to apply for programs and services. They also do not have a chef, so meals are inconsistent and do not follow the Canada Food Guide. This facility is provincially run, and in Saskatchewan rush assessments are completed upon arrival at the unit. Doctors and psychologists come once a month for appointments, but there is a month-long backlog on the waitlist. Many inmates do not get an opportunity to see a doctor or psychologist during their stay. Rosa pointed out that women act entitled, push the boundaries of their reintegration plan, and get away with much more in the reintegration unit. It is an open custody facility, which means that the inmates can leave and often

use drugs and run away, perpetuating their safe integration in integration into society.

Even as they returned to jail, however, many of the inmates Rosa interacted with are missing basic adult life skills, from child-rearing to juggling daily tasks like cooking, cleaning the house and doing laundry. Rosa made an interesting comment about how her provincial facility is overcrowded, and she wishes there was a way to spot gang members recruiting young people between the ages of 11 and 12 who are easily manipulated because of their criminogenic needs, as this would reduce the amount of crime and overpopulation of the system.

Such an approach underscores the critical need for culturally driven approaches to crime prevention through rehabilitation at the provincial level, not only to reduce recidivism but also to challenge the stigma surrounding Indigenous offenders, address the generational cycles of criminalization by fostering a more equitable and culturally informed criminal justice system in Canada. The racist stereotypes and misinformation, about addiction and laziness, that many Canadians heard throughout their lives relate back to the Residential System and a self-fulfilling prophecy, with generational trauma continuing to make the Indigenous person less likely to finish school and seem like they are somehow "natural" addicts (TRC, 2012).

Changing such misperceptions will require humanistic engagement in the judicial process, such as called for in Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) Calls to Action #35, #36, and #40, which have yet to be fulfilled. As the Correctional Investigator of Canada reported to CBC (2021), "In failing to close the outcomes gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders, [CSC] makes its own unique and measurable contribution to the problem of over-representation."

### The Healing Lodge

Our (i.e., Marcia and Anna's) experience at the Willow Cree Healing Lodge federal facility confirmed our initial thesis about the positive impact of cultural reunification. Brian, the Operations Manager, informed us about their programs and how the federal government's implementation of TRC CTAs #35, #36, and #40 would improve the lives of convicted Indigenous people eligible to transfer into Healing Lodge correctional facilities.

### The Penitentiary

Our eye-opening tour of the Prince Albert Federal Penitentiary took us through almost all the buildings, and we were able to observe the inmates up close. Our tour guide Scott, who has been a Correctional Officer for 27 years, clearly stated they must use force and maintain a personal barrier with the inmates. No relationships are allowed, and it is grounds for termination if a guard gets too close. Scott shared about the city within the city and how everything is handled inhouse, including medical and dental. A daily routine encompasses chores like cooking and cleaning, building maintenance, and other jobs in which inmates partake. In contrast, others participate in specific programming like education classes, arts, and Pathways, the new cultural wing that has begun its first program since COVID-19.

It was not very reassuring to hear about how the federal government took away the Farm and the Trades programs 15 years ago as they were not creating revenue. The inmates we observed were locked up most of the day, and their cells were tiny. One dorm area housed the calmer and quieter inmates who had earned their way in there, enabling more human interaction and a little more freedom. The realization of what Maximum Security entails was disappointing. The fact that the government has no goal to rehabilitate inmates who will be locked up for decades, if not life, was disheartening. Because of the severity of their crimes, they can not be left unattended to have a job or participate in activities or programming. When behaviour is such, one would almost think that some form of mental illness is playing a role.

## **CALLING FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRC (2015) CALLS TO ACTION**

The authors<sup>3</sup> call on the federal government for the full implementation of TRC (2015) Calls to Action #35, #36, and #40, to improve the lives of Indigenous people caught up in the criminal justice system as victims or who have been convicted and are eligible for transfer into Healing Lodge correctional facilities. We think these three Calls to Action would have the most significant impact on our society from both a victim and inmate perspective: #35 calls upon the federal government to eliminate barriers to the creation of additional aboriginal healing lodges within the federal correctional system; #36 calls for provincial and territorial governments to work with aboriginal communities to provide culturally relevant services inmates on issues as per the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (SC 1992, c. 20) such as substance abuse, family and domestic violence and overcoming the experience of having been sexually abused; and, #40 calls on all levels of government in collaboration with Aboriginal people to create an adequately funded and accessible aboriginal-specific victims programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.

According to the Correctional Investigator of Canada Ivan Zinger (2023), just "2% of all Indigenous people under federal custody are serving their sentence in a community-run Section 81 Healing Lodge"; CSC is meeting neither "the intent nor the original vision of healing lodges" and "spends just 3% of its total budget" on "Indigenous Initiatives, inclusive of Healing Lodges, Pathways and Elders". If Canada had more Healing Lodges nationwide, our penitentiaries would not be as overpopulated. Having something similar at the provincial level might also reduce federal carceral populations.

Canadian schools themselves also need to play a greater role in actioning the TRC CTAs about social education to eradicate the age-old stereotypes most Canadians grew up with. We inquired about the inclusion of a youth lodge for young offenders who have no connection to culture, who have been raised by parents affected by intergenerational trauma, and who fall into the category of having developed

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3. In this article, "authors" refer to Anna Ahenakew and Marcia Parker.

criminogenic needs for survival. As of today, no youth lodges exist in Canada as correctional facilities.

### **WILLOW CREE HEALING LODGE VS. SASKATCHEWAN (PRINCE ALBERT) PENITENTIARY**

In the research I conducted with Anna Ahenakew, we looked at the similarities and discrepancies between Willow Cree Healing Lodge and the Prince Albert federal penitentiary, which are minimum security facilities, and the experience is very different even though both follow Corrections Canada guidelines. Willow Cree has immersive programming, while Prince Albert Penitentiary's rehabilitation model is functional. Willow Cree had more rehabilitation opportunities; the Prince Albert Penitentiary seemed 100% cost-reduction focused and segregated with little interaction or personal connection.

At Willow Cree, they referred to the inmates as "nîtsan", meaning my brother or my relation. It was interesting to hear Brian at Willow Cree share about a negative stigma surrounding the Healing Lodge, because society is against it. In our opinion, the public perception is uneducated about healing programs and what the facility provides. Brian repeatedly said it isn't a perfect system, but they have seen a decline in returning offenders. Only 6% of Indigenous offenders released from a healing lodge reoffended, compared to 11% of those released from traditional incarceration (Brown and Sagolj, 2019; CSC, 2023). It is imperative that Canadian public education facilities properly implement the TRC calls for education to provide accurate knowledge promoting reconciliation within Canadian society (TRC CTA 62-66, 2012).

### **IS THE CANADIAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM SUPPORTING INMATES IN CORRECTING AND REHABILITATING THEIR BEHAVIOUR? NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH.**

Our recommendation to benefit the culture of corrections is for Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to fulfil the promises of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action 35, 36, 40 to ensure more culturally driven correctional facilities with relevant services to support indigenous people -- with a focus on youth and young adult facilities and programs. In the same light, we also recognize the need for better implementation of the TRC CTAs at

all levels of public education, which is a provincial and territorial domain, to eliminate anti-Indigenous racism, stigma and stereotyping with Canadian society.

We identified three initial steps needed to drive meaningful change, starting with compiling data from all healing lodges across Canada and analyzing it to demonstrate the impact of cultural approaches on reducing recidivism. This would help educate the general public about the positive outcomes of these programs. The second would ensure expedited access to mental health support services upon arrival to any prison or jail, including cultural resources like smudging and connecting with an Elder. The third would be to fully execute Calls to Action 35, 36; 40 demanding culturally relevant rehabilitation facilities and services for Indigenous offenders and victims. The key is making existing support services accessible to all Indigenous people, enabling them to begin their healing journey.

In this, we hope the Correctional Service of Canada (2023) five-year action plan to enhance the use of healing lodges funded under Section 81 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA) will bear much fruit. As well, the implementation of TRC (2015) CTAs 62-66 on public education, would seem to require oversight to ensure effective engagement by the provincial and territorial public education systems to defeat anti-Indigenous racism among Canadian youth. Systemic racism/discrimination/bias (a devastating colonial legacy) contributes to systemic inequities and barriers that exacerbate criminogenic needs, particularly for marginalized groups. For example, racist-based discrimination/bias can limit access to education, employment, and other social resources, which are crucial for reducing criminogenic risks. Addressing racism/discrimination/bias within the justice system and broader society is therefore essential for creating equitable conditions that reduce crime and recidivism rates.

### **CONCLUSION**

The research in this article about the 'culture of corrections' stems from the student-authors' pilot study conducted at Willow Lodge Healing Lodge and Saskatchewan Penitentiary (Prince Albert), which are located about 85 kms apart. It highlights systemic

deficiencies within the Canadian criminal justice system, such as the lack of focus on rehabilitation and cultural connection for Indigenous people. The authors (Marcia Parker and Anna Ahenakew) are calling for more healing lodges (and not just at the federal level), since they have cultural benefits rather than the punitive colonial structure of Canadian federal penitentiaries and provincial jails. Functional rehabilitation happens in a Healing Lodge because of the caring nature and design of the facility. Respect and equality foster positive change and the real feeling that people care about them. The atmosphere creates a family connection and support most inmates lack from their upbringing. By highlighting the negative impact of incarceration on Indigenous people, we hope to contribute to the dialogue surrounding the urgent need for reform aiming for a more just, humane, and culturally aware corrections system in Canada.

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## RÉSUMÉ

### Culture of Corrections

#### MARCIA PARKER

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#### ANNA AHENAKEW

Étudiante en travail social autochtone à la First Nations University of Canada (cohorte 2025)

Cet article repose sur une étude pilote menée par les auteures étudiantes, qui y présentent leurs recherches et observations effectuées dans un tribunal provincial et deux établissements correctionnels fédéraux en Saskatchewan : un Pavillon de ressourcement autochtone et un pénitencier fédéral. Le Pavillon de ressourcement Willow Cree et le Pénitencier fédéral de Prince Albert, en Saskatchewan, sont tous deux gérés par le Service correctionnel du Canada (SCC) sous des directives fédérales.

Le Pavillon de ressourcement intègre la culture autochtone dans tous les aspects de ses opérations, mettant l'accent sur un soutien holistique et la réhabilitation. En revanche, le pénitencier reflète le système répressif colonial, caractérisé par une absence marquée de culture et de soutien.

Les auteures appellent à une mise en œuvre rapide des Appels à l'action de la CVR (2015), en particulier celles visant la création et l'amélioration de l'accès aux pavillons de ressourcement.

# Spoken Word Poem as Testimonial

**DEVON LUCKY NAPOPE**

Indigenous Social Work student at the First Nations University of Canada, School of Indigenous Social Work, Saskatoon Campus

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*In a powerful and deeply personal testimonial poem, survivor Devon Lucky Napope—Cree from One Arrow First Nation (Treaty 6) and a Social Work student at First Nations University—recounts his journey from despair to hope and renewal. Once caught in cycles of violence, addiction, and incarceration, Devon stands as a testament to resilience, determined to uplift others. Presented as a spoken poem during a Canadian Studies Seminar (WEFLA-SECAN, 2024), organized by the Universidad de Holguin (Cuba), Devon's words challenge systems of oppression and embody the strength of Indigenous justice and collective healing.*

Dear God – please forgive me,... I made my mother smoke crystal meth. I just wanted her to sober up. I just wanted my mother back. I didn't know we were both sick. Please forgive me.

I come from a twisted world, a savage world... where my voice was silenced. With the burden of my family's struggles atop my shoulders the moment I was born. Molded by the world I knew, addicted to the pain and made to be someone my heart would reject. I was conditioned not feel, trust or talk. Broken by policies made long ago.

I come before you lost, imperfect – I know nothing. My name Devon Lucky Napope and I am an addict and proud member of One Arrow First Nations.

I stand before you... honoured, humbled. Representing not only STR8 up (First Nations University) but the voices not being heard. Who would of thought 7 years ago, I left the doors of treatment.... Afraid. 6 weeks before that addicted to drugs and alcohol. I don't deserve this. Yet, my new family would say otherwise. I am humbled, I am thankful.

I am told I am a encyclopedia on the school of hard knocks. An expert on trauma, addictions and gangs. In other words, pain, misery, and division. Well I would trade my life for yours in a heart beat. Because the only reason I'm afraid is... I don't want to feel that pain no more.

Yet there's thousands of voices behind mine, and voices right here in this very room that need to

be heard. So I need to own my trauma, to let the intensity of these emotions lead me, guide me though I try and try I cannot forget, the abuse, the neglect due to the insanity of addictions, the feelings of hopelessness, the bed sheets I put around my neck twice! The slash marks on my wrists, a constant reminder. Why wasn't I good enough for my family to change their ways? To overcome their addictions? I don't want to be your expert.

By the time I was born my hands were already bound In a no-win situation, born to a family totally lost in poverty, drug and alcohol addiction Our house might as well have been adrift in a sea, hopes and dreams cast away, lost. Me and my brothers had no choice about the broken homes we were born into And unaware of what type of dilemma we were facing, Or how to deal with racism in a merciless world.

Us newborn babies were not good enough, Our precious lives were not sufficient enough for them to change their ways And overcome their addictions I don't imagine my mother smiling down at me with all the despair her and my family have already been through We were not enough, I was not enough To overcome their brokenness, the pieces too far scattered

No sunshine on this day, born to a father who already left,

Vanished, abandoned before birth  
Born to a despondent mother who knew nothing  
about parenting  
What did I do for you to leave me, Father?  
What did I do for nobody to want me?  
You see I read my hospital records and felt dejected,  
disheartened  
My mother, my mother's boyfriend, my auntie,  
And my granny all separately took me into the  
hospital

**All before I was five years old**

But the last one was my granny, who finally kept me,  
wanted me.  
Whose spirit was broken though, due to the beatings  
she received in kind from my grandfather.

Eating at a restaurant with my brothers and family,  
playing duck duck goose in preschool  
These are two of the few good memories that I can  
recall

But that was shattered, crushed by drunkenness,  
Family under the influence of drugs, joints, and  
needles that were not hidden good enough for a  
curious child

Different homes and schools every year  
No friends I remember except those I could relate to  
because I believe that I am not alone.

The smell of Burnt popcorn still in my head, a hunger  
in my stomach, due to no food in the fridge, no milk,  
no bread

Loud, lewd, obscene, and immoral behaviour  
Spanked by an electrical cord by an unknown person  
who was not my mother

Thrown across the kitchen by my uncle  
Because I was already sick of everything, I had  
caught a glimpse of and everything that my young,  
innocent eyes were not supposed to gaze upon

Nothing ever got better...

From as long as I can remember, up to this very  
minute

These addictions are like a plague in our lives,  
That obliviousness, and the fear of the unknown like  
a disease that no antidote can cure  
Being under the influence in me and my family's lives  
is normal

I learned to accept these ways to live my life  
What hurts the most though, is seeing my family lost,  
most of all. This all before I was 10 years.

Today I know what victimization is

But you know what's the worst?

**Is being a nine year old**, and not knowing

For the most part you could conjure up, or envision  
What a boogeyman, a bad man, looks like, right?

But what about when he has a smile on his face

For any of the family in the same apartment?

Makes you smile, makes you laugh,

I had no father figure, no role models in my life

I was not aware he had ulterior motives.

So he found his way into my adolescent mind,

Slowly working my underdeveloped brain by

exposing me to videos I should not be watching

Manipulated me into waiting for him naked in his  
one-bedroom apartment for a toy gun I wanted

soooo bad

Just for him to steal my keys, and sneak into my  
apartment numerous times...

Granny happened to be gone to Taber

Auntie and Uncle upstairs in another apartment,  
Might have well been across the world

Little did anybody know I was curled up in a ball,

Fully clothed, blanket after blanket wrapped around  
me soooo tight...

A black silhouette in my home, where it should not  
belong...

Innocence gone, trust gone, vulnerability gone

You see I was getting schooled, unknown to me I was  
getting conditioned,

For things I didn't even know

Don't talk, don't feel, don't trust

From the day I was born, little did I know how cruel  
this world would be

Why God put me on this world just to suffer?!

My dear family, I know we love each other

I know we had some differences, my brothers

For that I'm sorry for what I put us through

Where do we go from here?

What do we do?

We're so lost, when does it end?

I can't so this on my own, but I'll do what I can

Nothing ever changes, I don't like what I see

I feel so hurt, and I know it's not just me

I don't what to lose any of you,

And I don't want you to lose me too

I don't wanna do this no more

I'm running out of tears, and my heart is sore



I fucking hate drugs and alcohol  
But I hate seeing my family lost most of all  
I can't do this on my own  
I know all we want is a happy home  
I love those feelings when we're were happy and  
together,  
But nothing ever got better  
Please pay attention to my letter  
You all know how much I feel  
You all know what I say is real  
Its about time we faced the truth,  
Break the cycle,  
And build some deeper roots  
I no longer want our kids to see us this way  
I know its hard, but we've got to find a better way  
Please, my dear family, listen to what I say  
Please, please.

**By the time I was twelve years old** I perfected and  
utilized these skills:  
Not talking, not feeling, and definitely not trusting  
I never talked about what happened to me  
I put that locked in a safe in the back of my mind  
along with my feelings  
But my memories and emotions had so much control  
over me  
Always clawing their way to the surface, tormenting  
me  
Making me feel when I did not want to  
When I just wanted to feel nothing  
Lost in my haze  
And that not trusting was always in the front of my  
mind  
A constant reminder to not be hurt or get hurt  
To never get too close to anyone  
People coming through my life just to leave  
Like an unanswered prayer lost in the wind  
But try as I might, that seemed to be my fate  
Pain and misery, and a lot more tears

**From the moment I was born**, I was bound to  
addictions and violence, broken by a past I knew  
nothing about. It hurt to see my family struggle. I  
wish I had the cure for addictions, and I wish I had  
a cure for my mother's HIV. Time and time again, I  
have been let down, people coming through my life  
just to leave like an unanswered prayers echoing  
in the hood. More than once, I have poured out  
liquor on my own grandmother, my own mother,  
"Please stop drinking," with tears in my eyes. Crying  
uncontrollably, unconsolable,.. as I pour my granny's  
drink out on her. She was mine, the only woman I  
adored and who loved me back. I was not about to  
be seeing her taken away from me over and over and  
over again. Please God, hear my prayer. I don't want  
to be your expert.

My criminal activity started when my uncle used as  
bait in a grocery store  
If that ain't love... then what is? I don't know  
It started with candy, food, clothing, materialistic  
items  
Break and enters, robberies, or like my older brother  
Keith says in his story, home invasions  
My incarceration started one month after I was  
legally old enough to be locked up,  
**Twelve years old**  
Me and my brother just wanted shoes, shorts  
The things we were deprived of.

Filled with anger and pain  
All we had was each other,  
The love for one another  
We tried to fight our way out of there  
We picked up three more assault charges  
I started a never ending snowball down the hill.

For the next six years I spent more than four years in  
youth jails

With these feelings and memories still lingering from  
my childhood  
Misery and pain my constant companions  
I do not make an excuse for anything I have done  
I take full responsibility for my actions.

I see lies behind eyes  
It's not easy I realize  
I see weakness behind the fake  
I see sorrows in the lake  
I see nightmares before I wake  
There's only so much somebody can take  
It takes a lot of pain before somebody breaks  
So much shame and guilt for fuck's sakes  
Is there a heaven for the lost?  
Is there forgiveness for the broken?  
Just leave me alone, I can take it  
Keep your distance, 'cause I don't wanna hear it  
Don't make me think, 'cause please, I don't wanna  
feel it.

I see a lot of lost souls with no hope  
But you could hope, right?  
To find a better way to cope, right?  
Quiet on the outside, but so loud in my head  
I deserve what I get, don't repeat what I said  
It's so messed up because I see lies behind eyes  
It's not easy I realize,  
I see weakness behind the fake  
I see sorrows in the lake  
I see nightmares before I wake  
And there's only so much I can take.  
Violence, misery, drugs, alcohol, and gangs are a  
given on these streets  
I do not accept what happen to me as youth normal  
But it prepared me for a cold world, a savage world  
The world of the streets, gangs and prisons  
I was there, had no education or goals that were  
worthwhile  
No history of my people  
No identity to be proud of

The gang provided acceptance, love, friendship, and  
a sense of belonging  
That was the illusion I was sucked into as an  
adolescent  
That ruthlessness in life was to be accepted  
Reputation, violence, drugs, alcohol, and gangs was  
to be accepted  
It was insanity, hands bound together since the day I  
was born  
Unable to break free  
Knowing no other alternative, not ever seeing a  
better way  
With my two best friends, pain and misery.

I was involved in two stabbings within a year  
Nine stabbings to my body  
Blood squirting from everywhere  
Down my face  
Between my fingers.

Unable to bend or stop the bleeding  
Three stab wounds to my friend's chest  
Who died three feet away from me  
Life drained from his face  
I have seen more pain in my young life than most  
people in their whole lives.  
Conditioned not to feel, to show no emotion  
Unable to even deal with it... with the shock of seven  
wounds to my own body  
Nobody to help me deal with this traumatic event  
Not able to talk about it  
I did cry, I do feel  
And I do laugh and love  
This is my reality  
And this is what I've come to realize  
A little too late.

So it seemed I was destined to be a drug addict an  
alcoholic, a no good drug dealer consumed by the  
hate of my past, fulfilling my role as a gang member.

Destined for the penitentiary – Forget love, I never had time for that. A projection of my family. Pain & misery my constant companions. I don't want to be your expert.

21 years ago. I was introduced to a good heart well serving time in a youth facility. This good heart was Father Andre, who has never cared to be payed, but chose to give his own time just to come visit me week after week for a year... The only consistency in my life. Where people came and went like unanswered prayers lost in the wind. I love this man like the father I never had.. For never leaving, for being honest, for caring when it felt like no one else did. He got me into treatment and was there yet again, to pick me up from treatment. With opportunity, hope and a whole new team waiting for me... my brothers and sisters. Str8Up. Whose endurance, resilience and insurmountable strength has brought us here today. The face you see before you, can easily be one of my brothers or sisters. I do not feel like I am alone anymore. We gather strength from each other, I know if I fall they will all be there to help pick me up as I them. They are my role models. We are each others keepers. Yeah, true homies in the hood make you

feel good. But thanks to my brothers and sisters, this is the happiest I've been in my life and the most motivated. We struggle together, we stand together and we recover together... We are the unheard voices Creating inspiration and hope as Father Andre did for me like a wild fire. On the behalf of my family. We are blessed and thankful for your time. My name is Devon Lucky Napope & I am honored to be your expert for next generation.

Dear God – thank you for helping my mom. She watches my babies well I'm in school. She's waiting for me to get home sober. We're learning together now. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Co-founded in 2002 by Father André as a chaplain at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre, STR8 UP helps individuals leave gangs and addiction behind. STR8 UP provides mentorship, housing, employment support, and Indigenous cultural healing. Through peer support and sharing circles, members uplift each other in recovery. Free to join, STR8 UP offers a structured path to healing and a new future: [www.str8-up.ca](http://www.str8-up.ca)

## RÉSUMÉ

### Spoken Word Poem as Testimonial

#### DEVON LUCKY NAPOPE

Dans un poème de "spoken word" (poème témoignage performatif) puissant et profondément personnel, Devon Lucky Napope—aujourd'hui étudiant en droit—raconte son parcours de la détresse à la résilience. Pris autrefois dans des cycles de violence, de dépendance et d'incarcération, il incarne désormais la force du renouveau et s'engage à soutenir les autres. Présenté en poésie parlée au SECAN 2024 à Cuba, son récit défie les systèmes d'oppression et incarne la force de la justice autochtone et de la guérison collective.





# Review of Benjamin Perrin's *Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial* (UTP, 2023)

**HOLLY WOOD**

Honours BA (Law), MA (Legal Studies)

Vice Chair of the Ottawa Coalition to End Human Trafficking

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*Perrin's Indictment provides a gripping, critical, and realistic analysis of the Canadian Criminal Justice System (CJS). He uses a victim-centred lens to implore readers to listen and act. For instance, Perrin delves into the intersection of gender, culture, race, mental health, and adverse childhood experiences, offering a diverse array of firsthand encounters within the CJS. These encounters illuminate its failures, successes, and the need for thorough reform. His writing acknowledges the intricate nuances of trauma, abuse, and violence, all contributing factors to marginalized individuals' entanglement with the legal system. This book serves not just as a rallying cry but as a desperate plea for assistance from the very subjects of Perrin's research who continue to face criminalization within a flawed legal structure. Perrin underscores the need for the complete dismantling and reconstruction of the Canadian CJS, advocating for trauma-informed approaches and lived experience to guide the process.*

While *Indictment* primarily focuses on the intersection of indigeneity and criminality, Perrin's approach is inclusive, peeling back the layers of the system to address its multifaceted issues. He urges kindness, compassion, and understanding as guiding principles. Through success stories grounded in lived experiences, Perrin effectively uses personal narratives to illustrate how incremental yet substantive changes can profoundly impact the lives of those caught in the revolving doors of an antiquated system that, in a sense, dehumanizes them as mere numbers on a docket. This inclusive approach ensures that all perspectives, including those of Black individuals or those in lower income brackets who also grapple with overcriminalization, are considered.

Perrin's work is not just a critique of the criminal justice system, it's a roadmap for change. Spanning the fields of law enforcement, healthcare, social work, rehabilitation, and reintegration, Perrin demonstrates how holistic solutions can create long-lasting, sustainable, and meaningful outcomes. He advocates for education on the criminal justice system and embodies the 'nothing about us without us' approach, which is essential for reshaping Canada's legal framework to combat and prevent crime effectively nationwide. This comprehensive approach instills hope and inspires action, showing that change is possible.



Perrin's work underscores the need to dismantle damaging stigmatization, grounding his analysis and research in hope. By critically examining sensitive topics like substance abuse, overcriminalization, childhood trauma and colonialism, Perrin emphasizes the importance of recognizing that many issues within the criminal justice system are fundamentally public health concerns, not legal matters. From 911 calls to prison release and recidivism, Perrin meticulously dissects every aspect of the CJS, holding it accountable for its failures.

He identifies systemic issues and proposes solutions, amplifying the voices of those most affected by our disjointed legal system. Perrin convincingly argues that the criminal justice system perpetuates harm and exacerbates societal problems rather than providing solutions to crime and criminality. He delves into the issue's core, exposing the intricate "legal labyrinth" he describes so that readers understand the deeply rooted problems he identifies. Perrin demonstrates that short-term, superficial fixes fail to address Canada's broader public health crises. Moreover, Perrin critiques current "solutions" to criminality, such as drug and mental health courts, contending that they lack efficiency and fail to adopt trauma-informed approaches.

Perrin's stance on specific topics, like mental health courts and other restorative justice or rehabilitative measures, could spark substantial debate. It's important to note that Perrin does not dismiss these measures but rather critiques their current implementation and advocates for a more trauma-informed approach. This fosters a more comprehensive understanding of underlying issues. Though poignant, Perrin's reliance on personal narratives could benefit from greater incorporation of empirical and statistical analysis. While Perrin offers solutions and recommendations for reform, they need more specificity for policy implementation, posing challenges in drafting and enforcing legislation aligned with his proposed changes.

## RÉSUMÉ

### **Review of Benjamin Perrin's *Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial* (UTP, 2023)**

#### **HOLLY WOOD**

Honours BA (Law), MA (Legal Studies)  
Vice Chair of the Ottawa Coalition to End Human Trafficking.

Vice-présidente de la Coalition d'Ottawa pour l'abolition de la traite des personnes

Selon Holly Wood, le livre *Indictment* de Perrin offre une analyse percutante, critique et réaliste du système de justice pénale canadien sous un prisme centré sur les victimes, exhortant les lecteurs à écouter et à agir. Perrin plaide pour une réforme pénale et carcérale, en s'appuyant sur une diversité de témoignages qui illustrent les intersections entre la justice pénale, le genre, la culture, la race, la santé mentale et les traumatismes de l'enfance.



# Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial

## By Benjamin Perrin

**CATHARINE PANDILA**

BA (Honours) Criminal Justice Student, MA Criminal Justice, Arizona State University  
cpandila@asu.edu

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*Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial, by Benjamin Perrin, lives up to its name. Perrin, having worked in a myriad of justice-related roles, most recently as a Professor of Law at the University of British Columbia, does indeed indict the Canadian criminal justice system in this latest work. Thought-provoking and exceptionally edited, Indictment includes thoughtful, if not raw, conversations and data woven between personal stories of victimization, racism, and violence. Perrin raises perspectives experienced by BIPOC groups, often not thought of, or envisioned and poignantly exemplified, such as the “talk” and “carding.” Perrin also discusses BIPOC persons being more frequent victims of suspicion and use of force.*

*Indictment* contains useful teaching moments, such as descriptions of traumatic historical relations between police officers and Indigenous people, and for those new to conversations on criminal and restorative justice, information on trauma and trauma-informed, the doctrine of discovery, Gladue, MMIW, and victim's rights. Perrin joins others in calling for greater questions to be addressed, such as whether the *Indian Act* should continue to exist and who is best to make that decision.

Victims' rights are discussed throughout the book, with mention of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and relevant case law. In addition to discussing direct victimization, Perrin discusses the lesser-known topic of secondary victimization, a process of being re-victimized.

The book spotlights a trauma-informed approach and is divided into two parts: part one outlines issues with the current criminal justice system, and part two proposes a new transformative justice model. Whether revolutionary or unattainable, readers are left to decide for themselves if the systemic issues within the justice system are beyond reform and reflect the need for a “reimagined criminal justice system in Canada” (p. 203).

Highlighting seven areas to demarcate a new system of justice, referred to by Perrin as transformative justice, each well-documented step outlines how justice can be remodelled, including the addition of a more health-care-based approach.

Suggestions include an embedded emergency response provided by mental health experts and medics working alongside police when responding to mental health calls. Perrin accurately conveys that a mental health crisis is not always best handled through the criminal justice system. What may seem daunting, Perrin can be credited with documenting areas where the justice system could be made anew and where processes need to change, not just amended.

Although not discussed throughout the book, Perrin concludes by mentioning his Christian faith, a personal description complimented by his overarching flow of compassion toward victims. This reviewer suggests exercising objectivity when reflecting on Perrin's discussion of policing, particularly within the chapter "From Protectors to Villains". Perrin's words model an adverse stance towards policing in what this reviewer feels is too broad a swath to describe the institution and all who serve within it.

Like much criminological research today, Perrin's book, *Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial*, accounts for systemic issues in the criminal justice system, lived experiences through the victims' voices, and an alternative discussion toward a pathway forward.

## RÉSUMÉ

### **Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial By Benjamin Perrin**

#### **CATHARINE PANDILA**

BA (Honours) Criminal Justice Student, MA Criminal Justice, Arizona State University  
cpandila@asu.edu

Selon Catharine Pandila, le livre *Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial* de Benjamin Perrin fait honneur à son titre. Ayant occupé de nombreux rôles dans le domaine de la justice, Perrin, aujourd'hui professeur de droit à l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique, dresse un véritable acte d'accusation contre le système de justice pénale canadien. Son ouvrage mêle analyses approfondies et données à des récits personnels de victimisation, de racisme et de violence, offrant ainsi une critique percutante et éclairée du système en place.

# COMING EVENTS

# PROCHAINS ÉVÉNEMENTS

Published in the language submitted.

Publiés dans la langue dans laquelle ils sont soumis.

## SAVE THE DATE! / INSCRIVEZ LA DATE À VOTRE CALENDRIER!

JUNE 2-3 JUNE 2025

### CIAJ-ICAJ 49TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice / Institut canadien d'administration de la justice

**THEME - THÈME** \* Decision Writing Seminar online / Séminaire de rédaction des décisions

**PLACE - ENDROIT** \* Online / En ligne

**INFORMATION** \* <https://ciaj-icaj.ca/en/activities/upcoming-programs/> et <https://ciaj-icaj.ca/fr/activites/programmes-a-venir/>

JUNE 4-7 JUIN 2025

### NEACJS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences

**THEME - THÈME** \* Cross Border Connections: Improving Criminal Justice Systems.

**PLACE - ENDROIT** \* The Historic Rodd, Charlottetown

**INFORMATION** \* <https://www.neacjs.org/2025-annual-conference>

JUNE 15-16 JUIN 2025

### ICCLR—INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CRIMINAL LAW, JUSTICE AND CRIME

International Centre for Criminal Law Reform & Criminal Justice Policy (ICCLR)

**THEME - THÈME** \* International Conference on Criminal Law, Justice, and Crime

**PLACE - ENDROIT** \* Toronto, Canada.

**INFORMATION** \* <https://waset.org>

OCTOBER 28-30 OCTOBRE 2025

### CIAJ-ICAJ 49TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice / Institut canadien d'administration de la justice

**THEME - THÈME** \* Environment And the Law: Protect or Develop, Is There a Choice? // L'environnement et le droit: Protéger ou développer, faut-il choisir?

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER - CONFÉRENCIER D'HONNEUR** \* The Honourable Leonard Marchand, Chief Justice of British Columbia // L'honorable Leonard Marchand, juge en chef de la Colombie-Britannique

**PLACE - ENDROIT** \* Fairmont Hotel, Vancouver (BC), Canada

**INFORMATION** \* <https://ciaj-icaj.ca/en> et <https://ciaj-icaj.ca/fr/>

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